

1600/1198

A POETICAL EPISTLE
FROM AN
UNFORTUNATE YOUNG LADY
AT PORTSMOUTH
TO HER
LOVER.

By S. JOHNSON, M. A.

THE SECOND EDITION.

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A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

WHEN Youth and Innocence, declining legal redress, are bowed down to the Earth by Treachery, when the last remains of Reputation are pursued by the most infamous Obloquy and Falshood, what Tongue can be silent, what Pen lie idle? It must not therefore be wondered at, that the Author of the following lines has been induced to comply with the request of his friends, and lay them before the Public. He does it the more cheerfully in hope of drawing forth a more ample vindication from some superior Pen.

It is now reported, that some very respectable Characters, who had long been slow in receiving conviction from unquestionable testimony, join at length in sincere compassion for injured Innocence, and in abhorrence of callous persevering Guilt.

It cannot therefore be supposed, that a Place and People, on all occasions eminently distinguished for every good and generous exertion, will rest a matter of such importance on the feeble defence of a few flimsy couplets; and look on unconcerned, while a Transaction of the most infernal color passes away, like a dream, in torpid obscurity.

Truth has already most wonderfully made its way to light, and the Clouds are beginning to be dispersed; but if it be possible, that any Persons, attached to their first prejudices, shall mark this Writer with an eye of malignity, he has only to observe, that he cannot stoop to deprecate their wrath, but must consider such ill-grounded censure as the most gratifying encomium.



1600/1198.

An E P I S T L E, &c.

PORTSMOUTH, *October*, 1782.

WHILE gloomy clouds o'erwhelm the setting rays,
Dark as the prospect of my future days;
While the black furies roll, disdaining rest,
Tumultuous as the anguish of my breast;
While showers descend in sympathy with mine,
My soul shall dictate a departing line.

Before I quit this dear, tho' unkind shore,
A sigh shall reach thee, ere I sigh no more;
For, crush'd by treachery, ere they well begun,
My days were number'd, and my race was run.

In vain, dear Youth, thy gentle bosom glows
 To share my tears, and dissipate my woes :
 Sorrows, like mine, admit of no control !
 Eternal clouds hang heavy o'er my soul :
 No gleam of hope imparts a transient ray ;
 No kind associate guides my wandering way ;
 No Mother folds me to her anxious breast,
 And soothes my beating agony to rest ;
 No Friend, no Father—Ah ! That fatal hour !
 Why did he delegate his hallow'd power ?
 Faithful himself, he could not falsehood know,
 Nor in the friend discern a latent foe,
 An hypocrite, whose complicated lies
 The prudent penetrate, the just despise.

Yes, let him triumph in the deed of shame,
 And fix a lasting odium on my name !
 Let falsehood all her flimsy wreaths intwine
 To grace his cause !—a simple tale is mine,

He



He took me from a gracious Father's hand,
 Led me unspotted from my native Land;
 A guileless Lamb, of no dark guile afraid,
 Around his knees the frolic hours I play'd;
 Look'd up to the director of my life,
 And lipt his hand, nor fear'd the Butcher's knife:
 Ere thirteen Suns my infant smiles had seen,—
 How shall I traverse the distracting scene!
 Or, how develop the detested woof!
 Beneath the sanction of his guardian roof,
 (Oh, dead to honor, faith, and all Heaven gave
 To grace the generous, and endear the brave,
 Lost to whate'er the good and worthy feel,
 Each fiend of hell attendant on his heel,)
 To my pure pillow, while suspicion slept,
 With Tarquin-flame the subtle serpent crept.

Wak'd from the fatal dream, convulsive thought
 With every horrid indignation fraught,

Spoke

Spoke my foul wrongs—but ah, congealing fears
 Suppress the clamor of my childish years!
 In speechless and unutterable smart
 The secret thorn lay festering in my heart.

Haft thou forgot th' involuntary sigh,
 That often damp't thy kind enquiring eye?
 Abash'd, I sunk beneath thy ardent gaze,
 While thy warm tongue grew lavish in my praise;
 While partial Love delighted us'd to trace
 In ev'ry feature some celestial grace,
 And fondly style them—(Ah, unhappy Youth!)
 The pencil lines of Innocence and Truth:
 Yes, while in raptures on thy voice I hung,
 The fatal secret trembled on my tongue:
 Confus'd tho' guiltless, tho' enamour'd cold;
 Timid through shame, through conscious honor bold;
 Firm in thy virtue, yet by doubts oppress'd;
 Charm'd with thy love, yet wretched while carest;

Grasping

Grasping at hope, bewilder'd in my views;
 Anxious to hold thee, terrify'd to lose,
 The tale of horror with redoubled pain
 Rose to my lips, and mute sunk down again.

Ah, tell me not in that distressing tone
 Thy weight of woes—to aggravate my own!
 Too much I feel—Yet, tell me, give me all!
 On my devoted head let ruin fall!
 'Twas I who taught thee Love's sweet pangs to know,
 Smil'd on the plant, and bade its fibres grow;
 With pride I saw its spotless verdure spread
 Round thy warm heart, and waving o'er thy head;
 Taught the young tendrils round my own to twine,
 Blasting my comforts to imbitter thine.

Oh, 'twas a lovely plant, and fair it grew,
 Of holy essence, and celestial hue,
 Till the fell Spoiler came—the Canker-worm,
 Whose eager eye long watch'd the growing germe,

Arm'd with a base assassin's midnight pang,
Crawl'd to the root, and fix'd his fatal fang!

And am I guilty then? Lurks deadly Sin
The temple of my virgin breast within?
Pure source of truth! Thou God, whose searching eye
The tainted tremble at, the guilty fly,
Be thou my Judge!—before thy hallow'd hand
I fall convicted, or acquitted stand:
Thou know'st, when suppliant at thy sacred shrine,
What grief, what bitterness of woe was mine;
What drops of anguish down my cheeks did stray,
When fainting at thy * Altar's foot I lay;
How bow'd my soul beneath th' oppressive rod,
When all I durst petition of my God
Was——“ Heal my wounded spirit, Gracious Power,
“ And while thy mercies on my bosom shower,

* These excruciating feelings in the lovely Victim are not an imaginary description,
but are well known to have been real.

" Supreme, Oh, hide for ever from the Sun

" My injur'd honor—and thy will be done! "

I rose, supported by the Prince of Peace;
But Ah, my bleeding miseries increase!
The ruffian hand, that sunk me to the dust,
Adds agonizing insult to his lust,
Pursues my wrongs with calumny's vile breath,
And aims a wound beyond the realms of death.

Am I abandon'd too? Through recreant fear
Is there not one dares shed a generous tear?
Not one, among my little host of friends,
That with compassion indignation blends?
Beneath whose honest front, and piercing eye,
Slander's foul mists evaporate and fly;
Active a line of glaring truths to trace,
And hurl confusion in a † Felon's face?

† —He who filches from me my good Name, robs me of that, which not enriches
him, and makes me poor indeed. SHAKESPEARE.

Rest,

Rest, rest, my heart! Alas, there is not one!
 Darkness and Clouds o'erwhelm thy setting Sun.
 Hark, a shrill voice, prophetic, and severe,
 Bursts in tremendous accents on my ear;

Triumphant Horror, in the foulest storm
That e'er did Beauty's placid mien deform,
With raven-pinion hovers o'er thy grave,
No heart to pity, and no hand to save.

Quick let me fly this inauspicious Isle,
 Whose frown is fatal, tho' so fair her smile!
 Fly, where Palmettos their cool umbrage shed,
 Repose my beating heart, recline my aching head.

Again the screech-owl note distracts the air,
 Chills my young blood, and gives me to despair.

In vain thy flight! sped by that ruthless band
Which sends thee weeping to thy native land,
Fleeter than winds, Alas! arriv'd before,
Thy infamy shall echo round the shore.

Just

Just Heavens ! and all ye heavenly Host, that stand
Obedient to th' Almighty's dread command ;
Swifter than light, who visit us below,
Oh, bear me, snatch me from this world of wo !

Farewell, dear Youth—a long, a last Farewell—
Ah, my foreboding heart!—a funeral knell
Already vibrates on my startled ear ;
Yet, why th' ill-fated future should I fear ?
Come, ye sad hours, if yet ye low'ring be
On Time's dark wing for misery and me,
Come, with your blackest horrors overcast !
Ye cannot wound me like the bitter past.
To die is all I ask-----The silent Grave
Yields a safe refuge from the wily knave ;
There Slander cannot pierce the tranquil breast,
And there the weary Traveller may rest.

For Him——whose base premeditated blow
 Compell'd this torrent of my tears to flow;
 Triumphant o'er Simplicity and Truth,
 Who cropt the blossoms of ingenuous Youth,
 Who with a lavish and licentious hand
 Scatter'd their rosy fragrance o'er the Land;
 Serene, who views them with a savage smile
 Blasted beneath his desolating guile;
 Let no vindictive arm the deed resent!
 A guilty Conscience be his punishment!
 Repentance wait him——'till his crime's forgiven!
 I rest my cause with INNOCENCE and HEAVEN.

F I N I S.



